

KEY COURTROOM TERMINOLOGY

ACQUIT

TO FIND A DEFENDANT NOT GUILTY IN A CRIMINAL TRIAL.

BENCH

THE SEAT OCCUPIED BY THE JUDGE IN A COURT.

EVIDENCE

INFORMATION LEGALLY PRESENTED IN TESTIMONY OF WITNESSES OR DOCUMENTS, RECORDS OR CONCRETE OBJECTS THAT IS USED TO PERSUADE THE FACT FINDER (JUDGE OR JURY) TO DECIDE THE CASE FOR ONE SIDE OR THE OTHER.

GAVEL

THE WOODEN OBJECT THE JUDGE HOLDS IN HIS OR HER HAND TO HELP MAINTAIN ORDER.

JURY BOX

THE SEATING AREA IN THE COURT THAT HAS A SHORT WALL AROUND IT WHERE THE PEOPLE ON THE JURY SIT.

OATH

THE SWEARING BEFORE THE COURT THAT YOU WILL TELL THE TRUTH OR DECIDE THE CASE FAIRLY.
WITNESSES AND JURORS TAKE OATHS.

SENTENCE

THE PUNISHMENT ORDERED BY THE COURT FOR A DEFENDANT CONVICTED OF A CRIME.

TESTIMONY

EVIDENCE PRESENTED ORALLY BY WITNESSES DURING THE TRIAL OR HEARING.

TRIAL

THE HEARING AND DETERMINATION OF ISSUES OF FACT AND LAW, IN ACCORDANCE WITH PRESCRIBED LEGAL PROCEDURES, IN ORDER TO REACH A DISPOSITION. TYPES OF TRIALS ARE A COURT OR BENCH TRIAL, HEARD ONLY BY A JUDGE, AND A JURY TRIAL, HEARD BY 12 QUALIFIED CITIZENS OF THE COUNTY WHERE THE TRIAL IS BEING HELD.

VERBATIM RECORD

A WORD FOR WORD RECORD OF EVERYTHING THAT IS SAID IN COURT ABOUT A CASE.

VERDICT

THE DECISION OF A TRIAL JURY OR A JUDGE THAT DETERMINES THE GUILT OR INNOCENCE OF A CRIMINAL DEFENDANT THAT DETERMINES THE FINAL OUTCOME OF A TRIAL.